

early stage support of start-up projects
an example of "pre-seed" initiative :
the foundation FIT

TT workshop in Ljubljana, JSI
Oct. 1st, 2009

Gabriel Clerc
head of technology transfer, EPFL, Switzerland
www.epfl.ch/sri



The EPFL today ...
... in short

7'000 Students (total) : x 2 since 1990
1'700 PhD students : x 4.5 since 1990
5 Schools
2 Colleges
300 Labs
2'400 Scientific staff and faculty (FTEs)

Federal budget ~ 330 MEUR /y
External funding ~ 110 MEUR /y

Centers, programs and special projects : *develop cooperation and innovation spirit on the campus*



IP management & transfer : *teamwork with scientists, resources for patenting, expertise in licensing , incentives*

Research agreements with Cies : *attractive and clear policy*

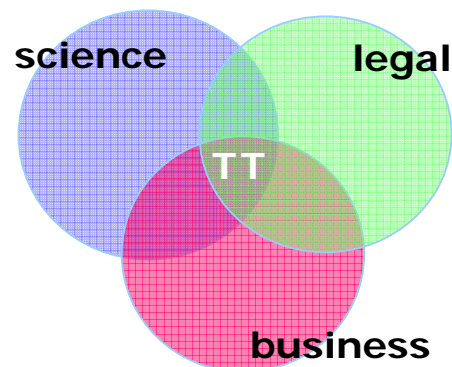
Start-ups : *early stage support, science parc, pre-seed, seed*

Large Cies : *partnerships, endowment, innovation square*

SME's : *liaison program "alliance", facilitate access to R&D projects, expertise and new knowledge*

service des relations industrielles

7 professionals
with complementary
background and experiences



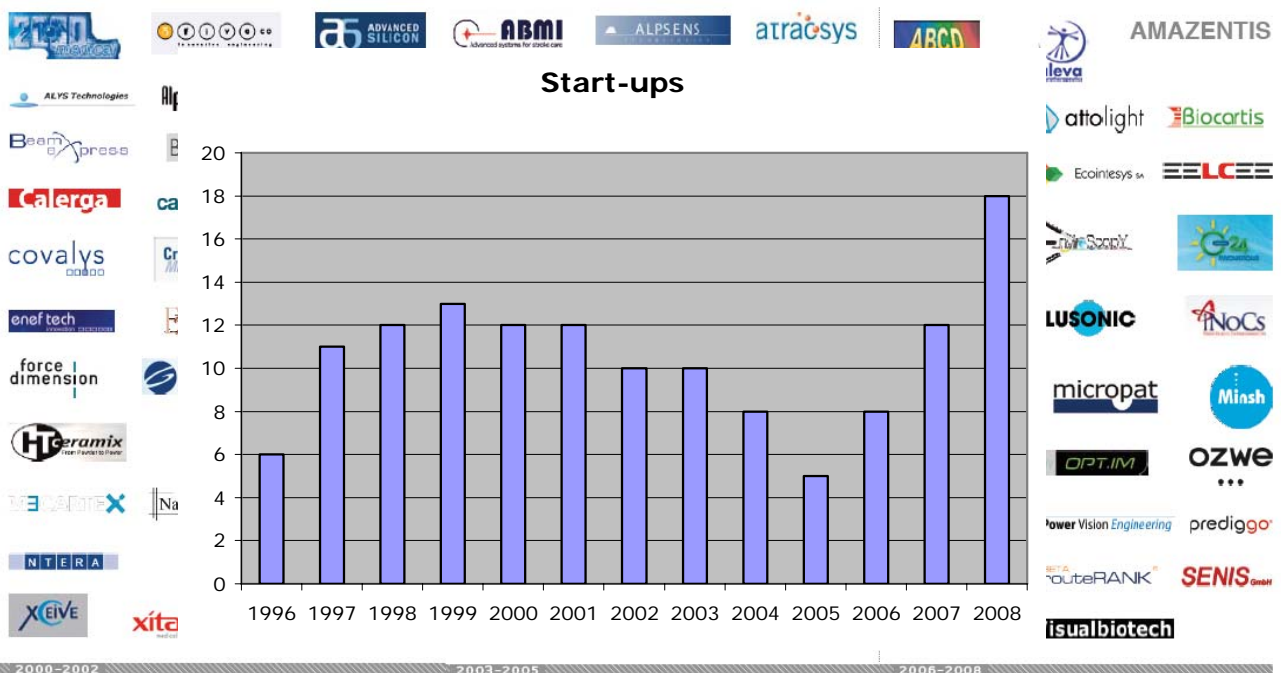
main missions of TT office :

- **Research agreements, partnerships**, MTA's, NDA's, ...
- **Intellectual property** evaluation, protection & mgmt
- **Technology licensing**
- Interactions with **start-ups** (licenses, equity, use of facilities, R&D, COI, ...)
- Practical course in PhD school

- New inventions disclosed : 70-90 / year
- New priority patent applications : 40-50 / year
- New licenses & TT agreements signed : 30-50 / year
- New Start-ups : 10-15 / year
- Licensing revenues : 1-3 MCHF / year
- Active patent cases : > 250
- Active licenses & TT agreements : > 300
- R&D agreements negotiated/approved : > 350 / year

Not included : IP directly transferred through R&D contracts

over 150 from 1990 - 2008





Foundation for Technological Innovation (FIT)

*a pre-seed not-for-profit instrument
in western Switzerland*

www.fondation-fit.ch

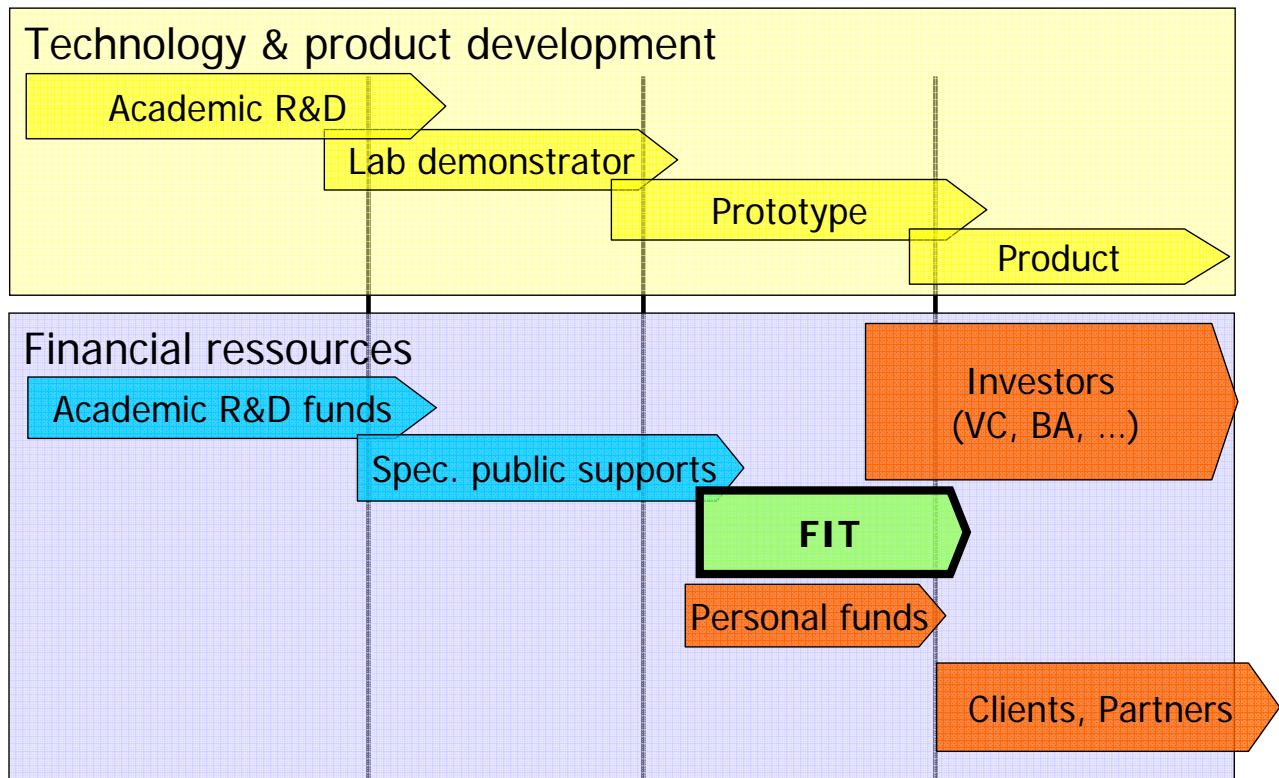


*The FIT mission is to help turning
selected technology oriented start-up
projects (all fields) into potential
attractive & hopefully successful ventures.*

*A link with higher education and
research institutions shall exist.*

*FIT bridges the financing gap
between institutional help / own money of
founders and Business Angel / Venture
Capital financing.*

FIT : key complement to personal funds of the founders



The FIT grants a financial support to early stage start-up companies in the form of loans (66 kEUR for ca 1 year) without interest and supports the founders at the same time with professional coaching.

2nd and 3rd loans of same amount are possible but intentionally rare.



Two phase selection :

1) decision by the selection committee to invite the candidate(s) based on submitted application and preliminary business plan,

2) final decision by the selection committee after presentation by and discussion with the candidate(s).

Coaching offered before application and after the grant.



The loan is to be reimbursed by the start-up company starting 3 years after the grant and usually over max 5 years.

In case of VC financing, the total reimbursement is usually requested just after the round.

The founder(s) shall reimburse to the foundation half the amount of the loan in case the project is a failure.



Funds are coming from contributors (donations). Contributors can participate to the selection committee.

Presently :

*one industrial company
one bank
one private family foundation
the chamber of industry and commerce
the state of Vaud
the city of Lausanne
the university hospital
the EPFL*



From 1994 :

140 projects examined

86 loans granted for 66 projects :

IT: 25

Micro/nanotech : 17

Life sciences and pharma : 12

Medical instruments : 9

Green tech : 3

*Total 8 mio CHF of loans granted
(ca 5.3 mio EUR)*



16 projects fully reimbursed

28 projects in process of reimbursement

9 abandoned projects

Total ca 2.5 mio CHF reimbursed so far



out of 8
"most
promising
start-ups" of
western CH
5 did receive
the initial
support of
FIT

